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Is Bush The Right Nominee?

President Ford's cabinet shakeup has raised a number of questions, some of which apparently won't be answered.

What qualifications does Donald Rumsfeld have to be secretary of defense, for example? This question was dealt with only briefly in the committee meeting in which Rumsfeld's nomination was passed on to the full Senate.

But the questions which are being asked about the nomination of George Bush to head the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) must not only be asked but must be answered as well. Mr.

Ford's nomination of Bush for this important and sensitive post poses problems which go right to the core of the recent investigations of the U.S. intelligence community.

Bush, currently U.S. ambassador to China, is not a professional intelligence expert. He is a political figure, a former national chairman of the Republican party, a crony of Mr. Ford's. Were he nominated for a cabinet position as Interior or Commerce, though, he would easily pass muster.

The CIA, however, is a different matter. Making Bush head of the agency could institutionalize the kind of politicization which the President should be trying to avoid with this appointment. Bush's political background and his closeness to Mr. Ford will hardly reassure those who are disturbed by reports that the CIA has altered its intelligence to fit the political needs of incumbent administrations.

The CIA needs a director who can both bolster its legitimate intelligence-gathering duties and provide the public proof that the agency is not a threat to civil liberties and due process. No one is suggesting that Bush is a man with evil motives or no principles.

But the CIA job is a most crucial one, requiring a nominee of exceptional integrity and ability. George Bush does not seem to be such a man. The Senate should give his nomination more than a passing glance.